

The City of Marion, South Carolina

Swamp Fox Scene



A FREE monthly news magazine for the citizens and visitors of the Swamp Fox City



Volume 2, Issue 8

January 2012



More than 130 families helped through city-wide giving

Residents of the City of Marion reached out to those less fortunate and gave to help others have a wonderful Christmas meal. Shown at left, fire fighters and police officers distributed more than 130 food boxes to families. At a cost of \$30 each, the city raised more than \$3,900 for the project. This is the second year the city has collected money to help its citizens.

Recipients of food boxes are recommended by DSS. Any money that comes in for the project after the Dec. 16 cut off date will be held for next year's project, City Administrator Alan Ammons said.



RunFest, Chili Cook-off & more!

Plan now to join the fun in February



Higher Ed Center celebrates first year

The Swamp Fox Higher Education Center is celebrating its first anniversary.

Opened just a year ago, the Center houses a computer lab and in January, will offer more Florence-Darlington Technical College math classes. The center is a collaboration of Francis Marion University, Coastal Carolina University, FDTC, and the City of Marion. More than 200 people have registered to use the computers in lab.

Operating in the C.D. Joyner Fine Arts Center, the Center is an opportunity for students to continue their education without having to travel too far from home.

Students enrolled in classes in the Center must be properly registered with the specific school. For information about the Center and its programs, contact FMU's Coordinator of Continuing Education, Suzan Orrico at 843-661-1283. For information about the FDTC courses, contact Marie Ferguson at the Mullins site, 843-676-8550. **To learn more about the computer lab, call 843-423-5410.**

Celebrating Gen. Francis Marion
Historic Marion, South Carolina
February 24, 25, 26

Join us in remembering & celebrating our American Hero with living history and more

- Militia Drills
- Swamp Fox Challenge with a 10-mile Rn, 10K, 5K, 1-Mile & Fun Run
- 3rd annual Swamp Fox Chili Cook-off
- Patriot, Loyalist reenactors in camp
- Living History exhibitors
- Demonstrations

For more information call the Marion Chamber of Commerce, 843-423-3561 or Marion City Hall, 843-423-5961

Celebrating Gen. Francis Marion Days

is sure to be a fun, educational experience for the entire family!

Visit www.marionsc.gov for updates & details!

Annual wreath-laying ceremony will also be on Friday, February 24.

Coming up

Keep up with what's going on in and around Marion!

January 1st

Happy New Year!

January 2nd

City offices closed; reopen at 8 a.m. January 3rd.

January 9th

Monday, 5:30 p.m.: Citizens Advisory Committee meeting (Second Monday of the Month), Fire Station, Bond Street.

January 10th

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.: City Council (Second Tuesday of the Month), Council Chambers, City Hall, 107 S. Main Street.

January 16th

Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Day, City Offices Closed.

January 16th

Monday, 6:30 p.m.: Marion's Fox Watch meeting, 332, N. Main Street.

Coming in February ...

South Carolina Artists, Past and Present: Organized by the Marion County Artistic Student Exhibition, Marion County Museum, 101 Willcox Avenue. Call Rosanne at 843-423-8299 for details. Three entries per grade, for grades 3-12 from all Marion County schools, will be displayed throughout the Museum. Students' inspirations will come from the topic "South Carolina Artists, Past and Present."

Throughout the month,

Yoga Classes are offered in the Marion County Medical Center, U.S. Highway 76, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. Call 431-2630 for details.

CITY NEWS

Sanders is City's Employee of the Month

The City of Marion selected Street Department Superintendent Ronnie Sanders as its November 2011 Employee of the Month.

A 28-year employee of the City, Sanders was hired in 1983 to work in the Recreation Department. He was named the city's Employee of the Year in 1987, and promoted to Street Department Superintendent in 2005.

Sanders has always been willing to do undertake any assigned job, from spraying for mosquitoes to cleaning

storm drains, from operating a bulldozer to planting spring flowers, and from decorating the City for Christmas to supervising a group of employees on a project.

Many of his duties involve



long, hard hours and often result in him being called out at night, to take care of such tasks as cleaning up streets after a storm or for some other emergency that would require his immediate attention. During the December Council meeting, the Mayor and Council acknowledged and commended Ronnie's efforts. Mayor Rodney Berry thanked Sanders for his hard work and praised his dedication to the City Marion.



Swamp Fox Scene goes to New York!

The Arts Council of Marion County paid a weekend visit to New York City just before Christmas. For some, it was a first trip. The group took in Chinatown, The Russian Tea Room, Porgie & Bess and more! For more information about the trip or the Arts Council, call Chuck Wiegert at 843-423-9918.

Who Do I call?

For answers to your questions about living and working in Marion, call ...

City Administrator, Building Official

Citizen concerns; Street, Sanitation, Storm Drainage Issues; Trees; Building Permits & Inspections

Alan Ammons 423-5961

Planning & Zoning Admin Assistant

Building & Sign Permits; Zoning Information; Historical Commission

Vickie Nichols 423-5961

City Clerk

Business Licenses; Yard Sale Permits; City Council Agenda & Meetings; FOIA Requests; General City Information

Pam Jones 423-5961

Personnel, Purchasing Director

Job Openings and Employment Applications; Supplier and Contractor Bid Opportunities

Elizabeth Fick 423-8614

Recreation Admin Assistant

Recreation Programs; Sign-Up Information; Recreation Facility Rentals

Cheryl Askins 423-5410

Municipal Court Clerk

Traffic Tickets & Police Fines; Bond Hearings & Municipal Court Information

Heather Evans 423-8616

Get to know your City Council



RODNEY BERRY
Mayor

Mayor Rodney Berry was elected to his first four-year term in April 2009.

He can be reached at **843-423-8235**.



RONALD ATKINSON
Mayor Pro Tem
District 2

Council member Ronald Atkinson was reelected in April 2011. His term ends in April 2015. He can be reached by telephone at

843-230-0072.



RALPH ATKINSON
District 1

Council member Ralph Atkinson was reelected in April 2011. His term ends in April 2015. He can be reached at

843-250-0446.



BETSY ATKINSON
District 3

Council member Betsy Atkinson was elected in April 2009. Her term expires in April 2013. She can be reached at

843-430-1137.



BOBBY DAVIS
District 4

Council member Bobby Davis was reelected in April 2011. His term ends in April 2015. He can be reached by telephone at

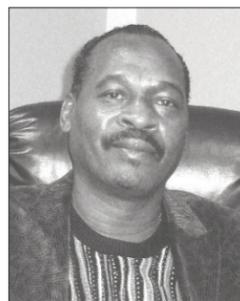
843-423-4655.



ODESSA GREGG
District 5

Council member Odessa Gregg was elected in April 2011 to fill an open seat. Her term ends in 2013. She can be reached at

843-423-4847.



MICHAEL BAKER
District 6

Council member Michael Baker was reelected in April 2009. His term ends in 2013. He can be reached by telephone at

843-222-9405.

Speakers discuss needs, plans and programs

Harper discusses county's economic woes, solutions

On Nov. 21, the Marion Rotary club welcomed County Administrator Tim Harper. Harper delivered a brief "State of the County" address, giving a report on the contingency plan that is ongoing to help the County through these troubling economic times. Harper stressed that he and County Council members are working toward long-term sustainable fixes to regenerate the local economy.

Regarding the "Inland Port" project, Harper said the County and Sellers' landowners have signed for the purchase of the 2,500 acres. The site will allow local workers a space where they will process railway cars that will come from the Charleston area. Also, he said, Florence and Dillon Counties have joined in the project to provide the needed funds for the project's infrastructure.

Harper said some citizens may be discouraged by the number of empty industrial buildings in the County, but that today's industries need more modern buildings. To accomplish that, the County has partnered with Pee Dee Electrical Co-op to build a 50,000-square-foot speculation building in the Industrial Park. The building will be LEAD certified and be built at no cost to the County for two years. The county will also save money, he said, as Pee Dee Electric will market the building for occupancy.

The building formerly occupied by Road Rescue will be filled soon, he said, adding that he expects to make an announcement in 2012. Harper also reported that the plans for AKS (a repair company for airline equipment) to fill the Sara Lee building is still in place.

AKS suffered economic set backs due to the decline in the airline industry that slowed their project in the county. Harper also reported that most of the land around Harbor Freight Tools belongs to a partnership between Marlboro, Dillon, and Marion Counties. The land will be used, if a grant from the Department of Commerce is received, to build another 50,000 square foot spec building. Any revenue from a venture on that property would be split between the three counties.

The county has created a new Beautification Commission, Harper reported. The group will work on resolving problem litter areas and beautifying the common entry ports into the county.

Harper also updated the group on the



plans to build a new family court in Marion County and said delays were due to funding the \$5.8 million 20,000-square-foot building. Harper said the county plans to more smartly use its dollars by purchasing an existing building within Marion County (possibly the vacant Wal-Mart shopping center) to house all of the county agencies. The need for a family courtroom grew in importance after the condemnation of the former family court room after a fire.

According to Harper, other towns have had great success renovating older shopping centers for this type of purpose. He said a new policy, giving local contractors a 5 percent discount off bids, will ensure that we keep our county dollars in Marion County.

Marion Rotary meets each Monday at the Marion Chinese Restaurant at 1 p.m. The primary goals of Rotary include polio eradication, clean drinking water and literacy programs. Membership in Rotary is by invitation only, but if you are interested in attending a meeting, call Rotary President Joe Long at 430-4333.

Wildlife Action promotes conservation, education

On Nov. 28, the Marion Rotary Club welcomed Senior Vice President of Wildlife Action, Frank Oliver, as guest speaker. Wildlife Action is a 34-year-old national organization which traces its beginnings to Marion County. It boasts 10,000 members and manages 36 tracts of land, protecting and educating the next generation about wildlife and natural resources. Wildlife Action reaches nearly 20,000 kids a year through popular summer camps and programs.

The children are instructed in conservation, archery, fishing, gun safety and

traditional American values. Each year, up to 5,000 children attend Wildlife Action Camps and, Oliver said, are cut off from the use of technology to gain a greater respect for the land, nature, and their country. The "Fur, Fin and Feather" program runs from September through March and features youth hunting days to further values learned.

Parents interested in having their kids participate should contact Oliver at 843-464-0635, who also encouraged adults to visit Wildlife Action's Fork Retch Wildlife Refuge and consider the use of the facilities for corporate retreats and holiday parties.

Rotary Club supports City

Rotary President Joe Long, at left in the photo to the left, presented Marion Mayor Rodney Berry a check to help with the Christmas food drive, sponsored by the Marion City Police and Fire Departments. The project provided \$30 of groceries from the Parmar's IGA to Marion citizens. Last year, the project helped 70 needy families. This year, it helped nearly double that amount.

Nall discusses Marion County animal shelter's work

On Dec. 12, the Marion Rotary Club welcomed Jennifer Nall, the Director of "Paws To The Rescue" and the Marion County Animal Shelter.

Nall started "Paws To The Rescue" in 2006 as a non-profit company and by 2008 was awarded the management contract for the Marion County Animal Shelter. Before her service at the shelter, the Marion County Animal Shelter had a 95 percent kill-rate, higher, she said, than major metropolitan areas such as Columbia (at 85 percent).

By using social media to network and promote these animals around the country, Nall has cut the animal shelter's euthanasia rate to 29 percent. This is even more impressive, she said, because statistics show an increase at the shelter from 1,200 animals a year to 2,800 animals a year. President Joe Long presented Nall a check to help her efforts at the animal shelter. Each animal, she said, at the facility, receives immediate vaccinations, and their own towels, blankets and toys to cut down on the spread of disease. These needed measures are costly and the shelter welcomes donations of food, toys and money. Nall can be contacted at 843-423-8370 or at 123 Dog and Cat Court, Mullins, SC 29571.

Questions about your water or sewer bill?

Call Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority at

(843) 765-4539

or visit them

in City Hall on Main Street.

The *Swamp Fox Scene* is produced in City Hall and is the City of Marion's **free** monthly news magazine for citizens and visitors of the Swamp Fox City, Marion, South Carolina.

It is printed by Herald Multi-forms in Dillon, S.C. City of Marion employees Cheryl Askins, Elizabeth Ficik, Winky Fore, Pam Jones and Dianne Owens comprise the paper's staff. Call Pam if you are interested in sponsoring an issue. The newspaper is distributed by city employee Dennis Brown and may be found in City Hall, in the Marion Chamber of Commerce's office in the Historic Train Depot, in the Historic Marion Revitalization Association office on Main Street and in other spots around town. Call us if you'd like to be a distribution point. The Marion Chamber and HMRA help pay printing costs.

Call Mayor Rodney Berry or the City Administrator at 843-423-5961 for more information.

Visit the Marion Chamber's Facebook page and discover their latest news and things to do!

Also on Facebook are The City of Marion and the Farmers Market & Market Place!

SPORTS & RECREATION

Coming Up

We're online!

The City of Marion Recreation Department has a Facebook Page and is on the Internet, on the www.Marionsc.gov web site. Find us under "Residents" and then click on "Recreation." To find us on Facebook, search Marion Recreation Department! There are game times, photos and much more.

WANTED: Recreation cheerleaders to prepare for competitions later this year

The Marion Recreation Department is planning to have a Cheer Competition Camp.

Registration meetings will be on Jan. 3 and 5 in the CD Joyner Auditorium from 5-7 p.m. The cost of the camp

and scheduling will be discussed at each of the meetings. Plan to attend one or the other of the meetings.

Organizers will be working to get the girls ready for a recreation competition later in the year.

There will be two age groups available, the Mini's (age 6-8) and Youth (age 9-11).

Aug. 31, 2011 is the cut-off for birthdates, which determines in which category the child will be competing.

Join us for aerobics

The Marion Recreation Department offers Senior Aerobics every Monday and Thursday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. in the Watsonia Recreation Center.

There is no sign up necessary for this class and it's FREE. Everyone is invited to come by and check out a class before joining us. Anyone with questions about the class can call 423-5410.

Basketball to begin

The Recreation Department's regular basketball season starts the beginning of January after students return to school from their Christmas breaks. Home games will be played in the A.C. Tollison Gym. Call 423-5410 for details about games.



City to have ribbon cutting on new playground equipment

Stay tuned to learn about the city's plans to dedicate and have a ribbon cutting on the new playground equipment around the town. City officials have been removing, renovating and replacing outdated play equipment with new.

City employees training for second HISTORIC MARION RUNFEST

All citizens are encouraged to move 'From Couch to 5K' with the city employees

City of Marion officials are again encouraging participation in the second annual Historic Marion Runfest set for February and are promoting better health of its employees.

The City of Marion Wellness Program is encouraging employees to train to participate in the 5K Run-Walk. Because preparing for any run can be daunting, Personnel Director Elizabeth Ficik is again promoting a way to move employees from the couch to walking and from walking to running, through the program, "From Couch to 5K." Each session will take about 20 to 30 minutes, three times a week. Citizens are encouraged to join the employees on the walking trails at Withlacoochee Park and Grice Recreation Center. Training will be four days a week, Monday through Thursday, at 4:30 p.m.

Anyone interested in participating with the employees should contact Elizabeth Ficik at City Hall, eficik@marionsc.gov or 423-8614 or Cheryl Askins at Watsonia, caskins@marionsc.gov or 423-5410.



Chamber recognizes Yard of the Month

Mr. and Mrs. Walt Marks, 813 Lombardy Street, have been awarded the Marion Chamber of Commerce Yard of the Month for December 2011. The Chamber is proud to recognize those in our community that work so diligently, and add so much to our community's unique character. Mr. and Mrs. Marks will be receiving a gift certificate from Tru Green Nursery in recognition of this honor.